A Voting North Star

Education Justice on the Ballot

Visit us at ejanc.org

@EJARaleighNC @EJAlliance @educationjusticealliance

Education Justice Alliance

EJA
This North Star voter guide is intended to provide information on key issues that impact Black and Brown families in our public education system. We hope you use the information to have discussions with family, friends, and community members to inform them on what issues are important and what influence political candidates have over the issues. We know the list we have developed is not exhaustive, but we believe they are key components for achieving the sound basic education our state constitution promises us as citizens.

Each section includes key issues with suggested questions to guide your conversations and generate ideas for other questions to ask political candidates.
School-to-Prison and Deportation Pipeline

The way schools approach school discipline often pushes young people out of school through unfair suspension, expulsions and even arrest for minor misbehavior.

Even though they make up only 25% of the statewide population.

48% of all juvenile complaints were against Black youth.
Questions to ask decision-makers
To End the School-to-Prison and Deportation Pipeline

Will you commit to replacing school resource officers with intervention counselors, such as, peace-builders?

How will you address the disproportionate suspension rates given to Indigenous, Black and Brown students?

Will you support increasing or allocating more funding to hire more therapists, school counselors, nurses and psychologists, and other school support staff?

How will you ensure that students and parents have a right to participate in any decision-making that impacts school policies?

Will you commit to updating the school code of conduct to move away from zero-tolerance discipline practices and policies?
Students With Disabilities/ Exceptional Children

Exceptional Children (EC) are those receiving special education and related services. EC students are covered under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which mandates a free and appropriate public education for eligible students ages 3–21.

American Indian, Black, Hispanic, and Pacific Islander students have the highest proportions of judgmental EC classifications, all of which are above the state average of 54.1%.

The current cap on special education limits the amount of special education funding a school district can receive.

Funding Caps at 12.75% of Total Student Population even if more than 12.75% of their students have IEPs.
Key Decision-Makers
For Students with Disabilities/ Exceptional Children

NC State Superintendent of Public Instruction

NC State Board of Education
NC Governor

NC General Assembly
(Representatives and State Senators)

Local School District Superintendents and Board of Educations
Questions to ask Decision-Makers
For Students with Disabilities/ Exceptional Children

Will you support the elimination of the cap on Special Education funding?

Will you support a new funding model to provide a more equitable way to fund public schools?

Will you support legislation to provide funding to increase the number of support personnel in our public schools? Like school nurses, psychologists, counselors, and social workers.

How will you address disproportionate suspensions of students with disabilities in our public schools?
Too Young to Suspend (Disparities in Suspensions)

North Carolina schools suspend thousands of students every year, many of them in elementary grades, pushing those students into the school-to-prison pipeline. Students in early grades should never be removed from the regular learning environment for age appropriate behaviors because they lose important instructional time. Young students should never be sent home for struggling with their social and emotional skills.

In North Carolina k-12 schools, Black students were 4.1x more likely to receive a short-term suspension compared to their white counterpart, according to 2017-2018 statewide data.
Key Decision-Makers
For Too Young to Suspend (Disparities in Suspensions)

- NC State Superintendent of Public Instruction
- NC State Board of Education
- NC General Assembly (Representatives and State Senators)
- Local School District Superintendents and Board of Educations
- NC Governor
Questions to ask Decision-Makers

For Too Young to Suspend (Disparities in Suspensions)

Will you work with school administrators to prevent suspensions of young students?

How will you make sure teachers receive the support they need to deal with the behaviors rather than removing students from the learning environment?

Will you support legislation or local school policies to place a moratorium on suspensions in pre-k through 5th grade?

One size fit all does not work in school discipline, will you support age appropriate consequences in the student code of conduct?

Will you support the removal or prohibit the new placement of any School Resource Officers (SROs) in elementary schools?
A Voting North Star

Education Justice on the Ballot

Visit us at ejanc.org

@EJARALEIGHNC  @EJAlliance  @educationjusticealliance
Culturally Responsive Curriculum

Culturally relevant teaching essentially means that teachers create a bridge between students’ home and school lives, while still meeting the expectations of the district and state curricular requirements.

In 2019 Forsyth County Schools voted against African American History classes. Instead, NC schools should integrate cultural traditions of all the students, including Black, Indigenous, Latinx students, and other students of color in their classrooms.
Key Decision-Makers

Culturally Responsive Curriculum

- NC State Superintendent of Public Instruction
- NC General Assembly (Representatives and State Senators)
- Local School Districts Superintendents and Board of Educations.
Questions to ask Decision-Makers
To Achieve Culturally Responsive Curriculum

Will you commit to working on assuring a culturally relevant and appropriate curriculum that serves all students, including Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and other students of color?

What will you do to make sure teachers get the appropriate professional development they need to successfully implement culturally responsive curriculum?

Will you make sure schools implement implicit bias training, restorative justice, and peace circles to be more culturally responsive to students?
For more than 25 years, North Carolina lawmakers from both parties have failed to meet their constitutional obligation to provide all children in the state with a sound basic education. When public schools are not even providing the bare minimum, the burden of this failure is disproportionately borne by children from historically marginalized communities.

Some of the most vulnerable children include those:

- Without access to early childhood education (Pre-K)
- Subject to racial discrimination
- With physical, emotional, or learning differences
- With economic disadvantages
- Living in rural districts
- English language learners
Key Decision-Makers
For School Funding

NC General Assembly
(Representatives and State Senators)

NC State Board of Education

NC Governor
Questions to Ask Decision-Makers
To Improve School Funding

Will you pass legislation to comply with the court recommendations in the Leandro case to fully fund public education?

Will you commit to direct additional resources to underserved student populations, including economically disadvantaged students, English language learners, and exceptional children?

Will you commit to make short-term investments over the next eight years to reduce the gap between lower-performing students and their higher-performing peers?

Will you work to modify the school finance system to ensure future stability in funding for public education, including predictable, anticipated funding levels that acknowledge external cost factors?
Contact Education Justice Alliance at educationjusticealliance@gmail.com

Visit us at ejanc.org